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AFRICA REVIEW

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NOTE: A Supplement to today's edition of AFRICA REVIEW has been published and disseminated in special intelligence channels.

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Africa Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the National Foreign Assessment Center. The Africa weekly focuses on major African issues and their implications. We solicit comments on the articles as well as suggestions on topics that might be treated in future issues. Comments and queries can be directed to the authors of the individual articles or to [REDACTED]

25X1A [REDACTED], Chief, Africa Division [REDACTED]

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Angola-Zaire: Results of Neto's Visit

Angolan President Neto's state visit to Zaire last weekend was successful. Although no agreements were signed and no major substantive problems resolved, the three-day visit served to commit both sides more firmly to continuing the reconciliation process. Zairian President Mobutu has agreed to pay a return visit to Luanda "as soon as possible."

Both leaders generally tried to avoid contentious issues and focused on those areas in which progress could be made most easily. They agreed to ask the Organization of African Unity to establish a border security commission as soon as possible.

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the two leaders agreed to establish 18 border checkpoints and to invite Nigeria, Sudan, Cameroon, and Rwanda to sit on the commission. The OAU will be asked to provide air and ground transport and communication facilities for the commission.

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said the Angolans tried to obtain a commitment from Mobutu to press Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola to cease its attacks on the Benguela Railroad. The Zairians fended off the request by replying that they would rather not become involved in an internal Angolan matter.

Over 50 Angolan officials accompanied Neto to Kinshasa to exchange views on cooperation accords on commerce, aviation, shipping, rail transport, and cultural affairs. Bilateral working groups were established to work out final details and prepare agreements to be signed at subsequent meetings of the two presidents. In the final communique, both leaders reaffirmed their decision to allow the voluntary return of refugees. Given the complex problems involved, however, they were unable to work out specific arrangements, despite pressure from the Angolans to move ahead quickly on this issue.

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Neto and Mobutu were together during most of the highly ceremonial visit and appear to have gotten along quite well in public. On his departure, Neto described the visit as a significant occasion and thanked Mobutu for the "spectacular" welcome he received.

Although both leaders appear pleased with the results achieved so far, each probably continues to suspect the other's motives. Some of the most important issues, such as aid to the other's insurgents, have not yet been seriously addressed, and both leaders probably expect the pace of their reconciliation to slow considerably as talks begin to focus on these issues. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Nigeria: The Army and Civilian Politics

Nigeria will enter the final and most difficult phase of its scheduled return to civilian rule in 1979 with the resumption of open political activity this October. In anticipation of this event, public speculation about prospects for the future is reaching new intensity. Among the most burning questions are: Will civilian rule actually come about? If so, will it prove lasting? Can tribalism and regionalism be controlled in a civilian political environment?

The Army, which has ruled for 13 years through three successive regimes, holds the answers to these questions as the arbiter of Nigeria's future. The uncertainties surrounding the transition to civilian rule preclude firm prediction about Nigeria's future course. Some light can perhaps be shed by reviewing in a political context the current state of the Nigerian military, with heavy focus on the oversized, ill-trained, and underemployed army, an overriding political factor with which any Nigerian Government must come to terms.

On balance, neither an Army coup to forestall civilian rule nor postponement of democratic government by the regime seems likely in the immediate future. Neither event can be ruled out, however, should civilian political activity degenerate into a regional and tribal donnybrook. Relations between a future civilian government and the Army are likely to be touchy from the outset, and many Nigerians assume that civilians will again prove incapable of governing and will not last long in power. It is clear that the present military government, like its predecessor, is strongly committed to maintaining national unity. Nigeria's future military leaders, whether waiting in the wings for power or in charge of the government, presumably will also share this goal.

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Discontent in the Ranks

A certain amount of discontent has long been evident in Nigeria's large and disparate 225,000-man army. The real extent of unrest in the army, however, is not clear. The possibility of plotting by ambitious or disgruntled factions is a constant source of worry for General Obasanjo's government. For some time now, the Army command has been cycling younger officers through a special course designed to indoctrinate them in their civic responsibilities and to warn them of the dire consequences of rebellion.

The regime appears most anxious about middle grade officers who are thought to be eager for power. They are suspected of being less committed than senior officers to the idea of civilian rule. Members of this group apparently believe they have not enjoyed the full political and financial perquisites of military rule as have their superiors. There were unconfirmed rumors last March that a plot involving some majors was nipped in the bud.

The majority of enlisted men seem more concerned about inflation, reduced benefits, and the threat of demobilization. These concerns reportedly were behind an abortive plot by 30 to 50 army noncommissioned officers that was uncovered last March.

The government has recently taken additional steps to defuse Army discontent, but many of the basic causes of unrest remain. Just now, however, there is no hard evidence of active plotting. Last month, the regime acted to appease middle-ranking officers and to shake up individual power bases in the military. It gave young officers political roles as state administrators and reassigned other officers at all levels on a large scale. The government has also been quietly promoting many middle and junior officers to higher ranks. These measures were taken in response to security reports warning that coup rumors were circulating widely and that precautions should be taken. For the time being, at least, the possibility of a military coup seems much less likely.

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The decisions to reassign General Garba, the former Foreign Minister, to head the defense academy and retain three other generals in the cabinet were designed to keep them from troop commands. The latter have long been dissatisfied with their status in the regime and will be forced to retire from the military with the establishment of civilian rule next year. Although Garba played a key role in overthrowing the previous military regime, he is not known to harbor antiregime sentiments and remains a member of the ruling military council. He reportedly was surprised and upset over his reassignment. Garba's apparent popularity in the Army and his efforts to line up an important post under civilian rule evidently fueled suspicion among his colleagues on the military council.

The Military's Role in the Transition

Inspector General of Police M. D. Yusufu, who was also named Minister of Interior last month, and Nigeria's new state military administrators apparently will be relied on heavily by the regime to ensure law and order once open political activity resumes. Yusufu, a northern Muslim and a Fulani tribesman, is an experienced and feared police officer who is considered to be close to the regime's inner circle. The 19 state administrators, drawn exclusively from the ranks of middle grade officers, are politically inexperienced. They may well have difficulties in dealing with increased regional and ethnic tensions that will inevitably follow the lifting of the ban on politics this October. State administrators, since they serve concurrently as garrison commanders, may as a group be in a good position to stage a coup on behalf of middle grade officers if given the pretext to do so by overly rambunctious civilian political aspirants.

Political campaigning could easily lead to communal disorders, and some informed Nigerians have doubts about how effectively the armed forces will cope with such unrest. The police are by far the best trained and most experienced in crowd control but would have to call on help from the Army in the event of widespread disorder. Earlier this year during an outbreak of student violence, the police exercised restraint and generally avoided

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exacerbating the situation. In one instance that required Army support, the troops overreacted and several students were killed.

Members of the armed forces, including those in the government, are eligible to run for public office, provided they resign their position four months in advance of elections. There reportedly is an agreement among senior members of the regime that none of them will resign before Nigeria's return to civilian rule to contest elections. This would be in line with the apparent strong commitment of the key members of the ruling military council to restore Nigeria to civilian government. These officers are determined to make their mark on Nigerian history and regard a successful return to the barracks as the hallmark of their domestic program. They seem to regard military rule as an aberration that threatens to exhaust the army's popular acceptance and believe that civilians should be given another chance.

There is no sign that General Obasanjo, whose national stature has grown considerably since he was named Head of State two years ago, is interested in playing a De Gaulle - like role in the transition to civilian government. Instead, he plans to retire from the military with the resumption of civilian rule. Obasanjo publicly disavowed the idea of a military-civilian diarchy for Nigeria after 1979, which was floated by an editorial writer earlier this year in one of Nigeria's national dailies. At this point only a small minority of Nigerian civilians, who fear a return to divisive ethnic politics, would favor drafting Obasanjo to stand as a candidate for civilian president.

Military council members are not immune, however, to the pull of ethnic and regional loyalties despite their good intentions. Sooner or later some of them may be tempted to assist favored civilian candidates or political groups clandestinely, although there is no evidence of this happening. Partisanship would make it more difficult for General Obasanjo to maintain the council's delicate political balance and could easily lead to serious splits in the regime.

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Postponement or Cancellation of Civilian Rule

There are circumstances that could cause the military to delay or prevent a return to civilian rule. Should regional and tribal tensions reach such a pitch during political campaigning that public order is seriously threatened, the regime might suspend political activity in hopes that passions would cool. Military leaders could well cancel plans for civilian government if they believe such action was Nigeria's best hope for continued stability and unity. A factor in deciding such moves would be concern that if the regime did not act, it might be overthrown by middle grade officers.

A coup by middle grade officers would be motivated by fears that the country is heading for chaos and that civilians are incapable of running the government, and by resentment that they have not had their share of power and wealth. The plotters might be galvanized into action by public disorders, which would enable them to cloak their coup as a rescue mission to save the country in its hour of crisis. Presumably any military faction that covets power would be aware that a coup would enjoy little popular support if the political process was moving forward without serious disorder. Simply denying civilians their long-awaited chance for power would only erode what little popular goodwill the military still enjoys and make it much more difficult for a new military regime to govern. It is true, however, that the general unease that has set in among many Nigerians over the return to civilian politics has made the idea of a continuation of military rule less unthinkable to the populace than it was a year ago. The civilian elite is nonetheless determined to achieve power once again.

The Military Under Civilian Rule

Even if a civilian government is successfully installed in October 1979, its relationship with the military establishment is likely to be touchy from the outset. Civilian politicians presumably know that the Army must be kept reasonably happy and that they must avoid divisive ethnic politics lest the new government be overthrown. The depth of civilian distrust of the

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Army is illustrated by the supposed ban on coups that was written into Nigeria's new constitution by the civilian constituent assembly.

The constitution provides for advisory positions for senior military and police officials who will sit on defense, security, and police councils chaired by the civilian president. These bodies may provide institutional mechanisms for a much needed civilian-military dialogue. A new working relationship is likely to be complicated, however, by the longstanding friction that has existed between the civilian and military elites. The military probably will be the object of thinly veiled criticism during election campaigning by many political aspirants, and some influential civilians elected to the government are sure to harbor attitudes that will work against accommodation with the military. These individuals have always regarded military men as unimaginative, heavyhanded, and wasteful; they resent the Army's having usurped for so long the civilians' right to govern the country.

The Army, with its consequent loss of power and prestige and uncertain of its new position, may find it difficult to respect political authority. Ordinary soldiers will be fearful that civilians may try to reduce their amenities and privileges. Holdover officers, who previously held political positions, will be uneasy if the civilian government comes under pressure from the National Assembly to probe allegations of military corruption and other abuses under Army rule. Many military men assume that civilians will inevitably prove themselves incapable of governing because of ethnic rivalries and that after a relatively short period, the military will again have to grasp the reins of power. Any faction that covets power would probably hope to achieve it by waiting for the political process to break down before staging a coup.

Many informed Nigerians view the continuation under civilian rule of General T. Y. Danjuma as Army Chief of Staff as one of Nigeria's best hopes to keep the Army out of politics. Danjuma reportedly would like to resign with the return to civilian rule, but he apparently would stay on if persuaded that this would

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contribute to stability. The 40-year-old Danjuma, a middle belt minority tribesman, is a thoroughly professional soldier who is dedicated to upgrading the Army and is seemingly in control of it. One of the Army's most respected senior officers, Danjuma is serious-minded, honest, and places national interests above tribal ones.

The ethnic makeup of the new civilian government relative to that of the armed forces will be another important factor in future stability. Any drastic civilian tampering with the existing ethnic balance in the armed forces or pursuit of political goals detrimental to tribal interests in the Army could spark a coup. The constituent assembly inserted a provision in Nigeria's new constitution requiring that the composition of the Army must reflect Nigeria's "federal character." This is intended to remove fears of domination by one section of the country through its strength in the Army. To implement this provision, the new government presumably would have to impose a quota system on the Army based on the population of each of Nigeria's 19 states. If this is the case, it increases the need for a population census. Census taking has long been one of the most politically controversial and potentially explosive issues in Nigeria, however, since competing ethnic groups have always seen such counts as determining their political weight in the government.

No reliable data is available, but it is generally believed that the majority of the officer corps in control of troops is drawn from the former northern region. This includes the Muslim Hausa-Fulani--the major northern ethnic group that dominated the country's first civilian regime--and a disproportionate number of minority tribesmen from Nigeria's "middle belt," an ethnic buffer zone between the Muslim north and the predominantly Christian south. The Yoruba, the principal tribe in the southwest, hold many staff positions in the Army and are overrepresented relative to their share of total population. The Army has few Ibo, the main tribe in the southeast. This group is still stigmatized for having attempted to secede in 1967 as the republic of Biafra, and the Army has undertaken no program to encourage Ibo recruitment.

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Nigeria's military leaders have striven to reduce tribalism in the Army and to create a greater national consciousness with the result that many in the officer corps seem less driven by narrow ethnic concerns than are civilians. More importantly, military units that formerly were drawn from a single section have been integrated with personnel from all parts of the country. This may make it more difficult for a particular ethnic faction to mount a coup. There are also educational programs to instill a sense of national identity in the armed forces in place of tribal and regional loyalty.

Another problem looming is that a civilian regime will have less money available to placate the military. It will inherit an austerity budget adopted this year in response to Nigeria's declining oil revenues and eroding foreign exchange reserves. Financial belt tightening has already caused the Air Force to postpone plans to procure new fighter aircraft and other desired equipment. Most important, at least part of the Army's long-needed barracks construction program has been halted, and construction under way is unlikely to be completed by 1979. This means that many officers and men will continue to be housed in rented civilian facilities. The continued presence of poorly disciplined soldiers among civilians could worsen already poor military-civilian relations in the streets. Sporadic incidents of beatings and other harassment of civilians by soldiers have long been a sore point.

Because of the financial pinch, the new civilian government could be tempted to accelerate the slow pace of demobilizing the Army, which was built up massively during the 1967-70 civil war. Demobilization is an extremely sensitive political issue, and no expeditious way has yet been found to reduce the Army. This is a necessity if the Army is to become more manageable and efficient. Well-publicized plans by the present regime in its first days to reduce the Army to 150,000 men by 1979 contributed to a bloody coup attempt in February 1976. Since then, the regime has pursued a carefully phased and far less ambitious reduction program. It

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claims to have discharged and found jobs for 25,000 soldiers in the past three years. Some of them, however, have merely been transferred to the undermanned police force. (SECRET NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-ORCON)

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Nigeria: The Press and Future Politics

As Nigeria approaches the scheduled resumption of open political activity in October, the military government is casting a concerned eye at the rambunctious Nigerian press and is stepping up efforts to control the news media. The military leadership believes the press may be one of the keys both to maintaining stability during this critical period and to ensuring a peaceful turn-over to civilian rule scheduled for October 1979.

The government has periodically warned the press this year, with mixed success, to avoid giving publicity to aspiring politicians whose behind-the-scenes efforts to cement political alliances are becoming increasingly frenetic. With open politicking allowed after October, the press can be expected to try to carve out a greater role for itself in a civilian environment. The press will be tempted more than ever to step across the informal limits the regime has established on criticism of the government and publication of divisive commentaries on the sensitive issues of tribalism, regionalism, and religion.

Many informed Nigerians doubt whether Nigeria can withstand the stress of open politicking. They fear that politicking will exacerbate regional and religious tensions built up because of the controversy earlier this year in the constituent assembly over a proposal for an Islamic court of appeals. Their doubts may be well founded.

Nigerian politicians proved divisive and demagogic during the country's short postindependence experiment in civilian government. The sensationalist press helped to inflame ethnic rivalries, which led to the collapse of civilian rule in 1966 and the civil war that followed.

In the event of a successful transition to civilian rule, which we believe is still likely, a civilian government operating in a climate of partisan political

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activity will inevitably have to be more attuned than Nigeria's military regimes to public opinion and press criticism. The new civilian regime will inherit institutional mechanisms for increased government control of the information media, and the ruling party can be expected to try to impose its views on the press. The military has had difficulty muzzling the media, however, and civilians may find the task even more elusive.

Nigerian journalists, among the freest and most vigorous in Africa, are likely to push hard for greater press freedom once less restrictive civilian rule is restored. If the press becomes more outspoken and critical of government policies, strong residual anti-American sentiment among many journalists may find a greater outlet. A civilian government, especially one that lacks a broad popular mandate, may well find it more difficult in the face of press criticism to support actively US initiatives in southern Africa if prospects for their success seem poor.

Position and Performance of the Media

Even under 12 years of military rule Nigerian journalists have been allowed more freedom than their counterparts in many other African states. Government-controlled media--all television and radio stations are state-run and the government now holds a 60 percent equity in Nigeria's two major newspapers (see chart)--are used to present government views, but both the government-controlled and independent newspapers are frequently critical of the regime's policies. The government is attentive to such criticism and to the public reactions such criticism generates. There are few instances of outright censorship of print or broadcasting media.

It is always difficult to determine the degree to which the government-controlled media really reflect the views of the regime. Prior clearance of news reporting for publishing and broadcasting is not required. The government media employ a number of editorial writers who hold a wide variety of opinions. Thus a position taken in an editorial commentary is often altered or contradicted in a subsequent edition.

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Selected Daily Newspapers *			
Name	Place Published	Circulation	Political Orientation
Major Dailies			
Daily Times	Lagos	250,000	Largest national daily; owned by federal government.
New Nigerian	Kaduna	75,000	Second largest national daily; owned by federal government, but oriented toward predominantly Muslim north.
Punch	Lagos	50,000	Independently owned.
Nigerian Tribune	Ibadan	50,000	Independently owned; mouthpiece of veteran Yoruba tribal politician and presidential aspirant Chief Obafemi Awolowo.
Renaissance	Enugu	50,000	Owned by Anambra State, one of two states dominated by the major Ibo tribe
Daily Sketch	Ibadan	40,000	Owned by Oyo State, one of four states dominated by the major Yoruba tribe.
Lesser Dailies			
Daily Express	Lagos	NA	Independently owned.
West African Pilot	Lagos	5,000	Independently owned; regularly carries Soviet-supplied articles and is often quoted by Radio Havana.
Daily Star	Enugu	NA	Apparently independent Ibo-oriented newspaper.
Morning Post	Lagos	31,000	An official organ of the federal government.
Nigerian Chronicle	Calabar	NA	Owned by Cross Rivers State; represents minority tribes in the southeast.
Nigerian Herald	Ilorin	NA	Owned by Kwara State; represents northern minority tribes; frequently carries Soviet-supplied items.
Nigerian Observer	Benin City	NA	Owned by Bendel State; represents minority tribes in the south central region.
Nigerian Standard	Jos	NA	Apparently owned by Plateau State; represents northern minority tribes ("Middle belt").
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<p>* All newspapers in this list are published in English. In 1978, backed by an extensive tradition of indigenous journalism, the Nigerian press published over 100 newspapers and periodicals with a circulation of over 2 million copies and an estimated readership of over 6 million persons. This list will swell after October when political parties are allowed to form and establish their own newspapers.</p>			

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The regime relies on indirect monitoring of the media; offending journalists occasionally are jailed, and publications sometimes are banned. The government's press secretary meets weekly with editors of all the country's newspapers to discuss in general what the regime wants to see in print with the understanding that reporting should take the government's desires into account. The boundaries of what is permissible have never been clearly set, and the Nigerian press since the end of the country's civil war in 1970 has been testing and expanding these boundaries.

Journalists, while resisting conformity to the official line, generally have avoided being too outspoken for fear of government reprisals. Prior to Head of State General Obasanjo's visit to the US last year the press felt free to engage in open criticism of the government for tilting too close to the US on southern African issues, but it was then told to cease. During the recent review of Nigeria's new constitution for civilian rule, journalists campaigned unsuccessfully for the expansion of guarantees of press freedoms contained in the document.

The government is displeased with the way Nigerian newspapers treated the country's domestic situation last spring when tensions arising from a student strike, economic austerity measures, and the Islamic court issue created the country's worst political crisis in two years. The press took issue with the government's decision to increase school fees, which touched off student violence. No newspaper attempted to explain fully the need for economic retrenchment in the face of declining oil revenues. Press coverage of the Islamic court controversy reflected and emphasized Nigeria's regional and religious divisions.

Government Moves To Harness the Media

The regime has apparently decided to tighten its clamps on the information media. It looks to the Minister of Information to ensure greater journalistic responsibility and accuracy, and last month it placed a capable, trusted civilian in control of the Ministry.

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In the past three years the government has created a federal agency to coordinate radio and television broadcasting. It is particularly aware that television, now available in 10 major urban centers, will for the first time play an important part in election campaigning. The government is pushing plans to have operational by October a press council for both newspaper and broadcasting journalists and a national news agency, although this target date is unlikely to be met. The press council would certify practicing journalists, while the news agency is intended to control the content of news used domestically and for dissemination by Nigeria-based foreign wire service. Among the stated reasons for a government news agency is the need to correct "false" stories and impressions about Nigeria in foreign reporting, which reflects longstanding Nigerian sensitivity to real and imagined slights and criticism.

Late last year, the military government caused a political storm in the predominantly Muslim north when it terminated all shortwave broadcasts by state government-owned radio stations because they served to reinforce regional particularism. Radio Kaduna's shortwave service had traditionally served as the voice of the northern political and religious establishment and was generally listened to as an enunciator of northern views by the illiterate masses. The curtailment of the station's broadcast coverage will make it more difficult for northern political aspirants to reach their constituents. The government's decision has increased northern disdain for what is already viewed as predominantly southern, non-Muslim-oriented radio and television coverage emanating from the Lagos-based Nigerian broadcasting corporation. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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CONGO: President Yhomby Opango has used an alleged coup attempt on 15 August to move against a number of southern, conservative opponents of his northern-dominated, leftist regime. The three alleged ring-leaders are rumored to have been executed, and a number of other southern politicians have been accused of complicity and are likely to be arrested. Few details on the plot are available. The government has not followed up on Yhomby's initial charges that some Western governments were involved. The President wishes to avoid jeopardizing the gradual rapprochement with the West that has developed over the past year. Yhomby, however, has denied the French Ambassador access to a French national accused of complicity in the plot. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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